

Amendment After Final Action
U.S. Patent Application No. 10/043,288

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) In a system for manufacturing fibers including a spin beam assembly, and a quenching chamber in communication with a drawing chamber, wherein the system maintains an enclosed environment between the spin beam assembly, the quenching chamber and the drawing chamber to prevent uncontrolled gas currents from entering the enclosed environment, a method of forming a non-woven web of fibers comprising:

(a) delivering a plurality of polymer streams from the spin beam assembly to spinneret orifices, wherein at least two of the polymer streams include differing polymer components, and the polymer streams including differing polymer components are segregated and are independently maintained at different temperatures ~~at least prior to delivery to the spinneret orifices~~ within the spin beam assembly;

(b) extruding the plurality of polymer streams through the spinneret orifices to form a plurality of filaments;

(c) quenching the extruded filaments by contacting the filaments with a gas stream in the quenching chamber;

(d) drawing the quenched filaments in the drawing chamber; and

(e) depositing the drawn filaments onto a forming surface to form a non-woven fibrous web on the forming surface.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein step (a) includes:

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(a.1) delivering segregated polymer streams at varying flow rates to the spinneret orifices.

10. (Original) The method of claim 7, further comprising:

(f) forming an array of multicomponent fibers.

11. (Original) The method of claim 7, further comprising:

(f) forming an array of bicomponent fibers.

12. (Original) The method of claim 7, further comprising:

(f) forming an array of single component fibers, wherein at least one single component fiber consists of a polymer component that is different from a polymer component of at least one other single component fiber.

13. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein the differing polymer components are segregated and independently maintained at different temperatures within the spin beam assembly by providing a plurality of manifold sections within the spin beam assembly, each manifold section being configured to receive a respective polymer component and a heat transfer medium that maintains the respective polymer component at a selected temperature.

14. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein the differing polymer components are segregated and independently maintained at different temperatures within the spin beam assembly by providing a plurality of pump blocks within the spin beam assembly and a plurality of pumps disposed on the pump blocks, and the spin beam assembly and pump blocks are configured to limit heat transfer from each pump block to polymer components flowing within each pump block.

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15. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein the differing polymer components are segregated and independently maintained at different temperatures within the spin beam assembly by providing a plurality of pump blocks within the spin beam assembly and a plurality of pumps disposed on the pump blocks, and the spin beam assembly and pump blocks are configured to limit heat transfer between different polymer components flowing within each pump block.